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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

DECORATIVE METAL WORK.



THE decorative uses of metal would alone be sufficient to form a volume, leaving aside the delicate manipulations of gold and silversmiths. The commercial artist who makes use of iron, bronze, copper, brass and nickel, from the production of huge iron columns to the ornamental plaque, decorated with the bust of a poet, we find a thousand metallic forms which serve to decorate our furniture and beautify our homes, the consideration

of which is worthy of the most careful attention.

The use and application of metal work and decoration, both as fixtures for appliances and useful domestic articles, are very ancient. We find records of bronze being extensively used by the Grecians and Romans, Greece especially bringing the arts of working in bronze to perfection. Not only are works of colossal form produced by them in this metal, but the ornaments of their temples, doors, weapons, armor, and the prows of their galleys, were made of it. They had also a process of hardening and tempering bronze, which enabled them to make this metal into many implements which require a keen edge, such as axes, saws, and so on.

Coming down to our own times, we are reminded that among the many reforms first introduced by A. Welby Pugin, one of the ablest modern Gothic designers, it was made espe-

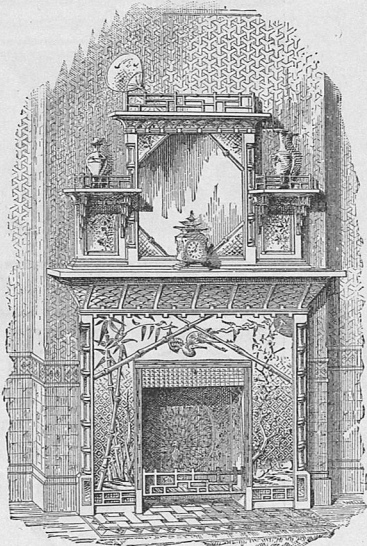


Fig. 1.—Mantel-piece, Decorated with Galvanoplastic Panels in Copper.

cially apparent that brass was a metal having a beauty of its own, and that it could be used to advantage in many ways, both in ecclesiastical and domestic purposes. Brass will take a brilliant polish, and the metal's adaptability for design has been thoroughly appreciated by modern designers. In all work connected with the household there is now no need to say a word for brass in arrangements for lighting, in grilles, dishes, ornaments, and so on, for it is used with overwhelming success, and is even made into such things as jardinières and tables.

Another material which adapts itself admirably to the decoration of furniture is bronze. We have scarcely employed the metal for this particular purpose for many years, whereas the Europeans have been very skillful in its use for generations. Bronze has as yet failed to become widely popular in America, one reason being the preference shown for articles made in copper by the various electro-plating and galvanoplastic processes, and by reason of the preference shown for brass on account of its more cheerful appearance. Bronze has a mellow, sober hue,

and its durability and adaptability to the various purposes required and the choice effects that can be produced by the application of bronze to all light wood, such as satinwood, ash, pine, and so on, should recommend its increased use to our furniture makers. We have no doubt that this metal, with its grave, unobtrusive tones, will be more generally used than hitherto in this country.

The use of copper in decorative metal work is largely on the increase, by reason of the ease with which it can be used in various electro-plating processes.

Perhaps there is no firm in this country that has made so extensive a use of copper, as well as bronze and iron, in architec-

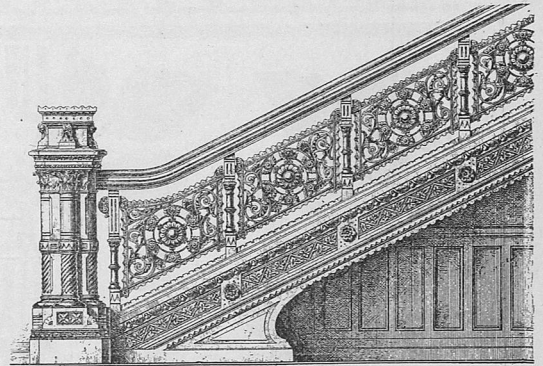


Fig. 2.—Stairway in Bronze and Iron.

tural work, as that of Messrs. Paulson & Eger of 220 West Twenty-third street, New York. Their application of copper to decorative work is shown in samples of ceilings, which have been first finely modeled in a plastic material, an impression of which is accurately made in wax, and the wax is suspended in an electric bath, and is rapidly coated with a film of copper, which can be produced in any given thickness by the aid of the electric dynamo. The same process has been applied with very fine results to the reproduction of the sculptured panels of every kind, metallic plaques with sculptured heads, monumental panels, and for the metal panels in ornamental mantels. The original can be reproduced with the utmost nicety and artistic effect, and the cost is only about one-half that of solid bronze.

We show herewith, in Fig. 1, a mantel-piece decorated with galvanoplastic panels in copper. A very delicate use of copper has been to coat a piece of real lace with the metal,

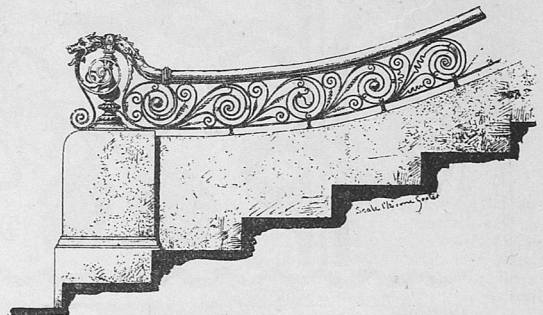


Fig. 3.—Bronze Railing for Exterior Stairway.

which is afterwards plated with brass, and forms a most decorative fire-screen. The modern use of metallic enrichments for high-class furniture may be said to date from the time of Chippendale and Sheraton, who employed metallic enrichments for their work. Messrs. Paulson & Eger, careful of what is artistic, are producing a large quantity of really high class work in this department, the designs being all thought out and fashioned after the first-class models.

The electrotyping of metal has been carried so far that en-

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tire shop fronts are constructed by this process. One of the ceilings of the Equitable Building is made of electroplated copper on wood, which exhibits the capabilities of this beautiful method of interior decoration.

Fig. 2 is a beautifully designed architectural stairway in bronze and iron, the only part constructed of wood being the hand-rail. Fig. 3 is a finely wrought bronze railing for exterior work.

The use of metal work in modern furnishings of all kinds is making rapid progress, and taking the place of articles that have hitherto been manufactured of wood. The firm manufactures altar railings, balusters, card tables, ceilings, mantel brackets, coats of arms, columns, cranes, bank and office fittings, elevator fronts, elevator cars, escutcheons, fenders, baskets, fire linings, fire-screens and fire sets, flue stoppers, garden seats, gates, grille panels, guards, ash receivers, hat racks, hall stands, five-o'clock tea-kettle stands, lamps, chandeliers, mantels, letter chutes, medallion newel posts, metal partitions, railings, statues, screens, transoms, urns, and wood carriers, in brass, bronze, copper and iron.

DECORATIVE NOTES.

THE drapery of the present season bids fair to outdo that of any that is past. The damask is wondrously fine, and the designs are truly artistic, while the needle work is simply exquisite. A few years ago the fashion of plain, infigured cloth came into vogue, and the cover depended on its texture and quality for beauty. Then center cloths came into use, and the table was made gorgeous with color, and beautiful with the loveliest of needle work, but now we have gone a step beyond, and the really smart cloths have centers worked upon their own surfaces and are really works of art. For example, a cover of snowy damask designed for dinner or banquet use has embroidered on its centre a design of lilies. The flowers are outlined only in white ecclesiastical silk, and are enclosed in a large oval, which is marked by a row of outlining done with the same silk as that used for the flowers. Lastly the background, or all the space included in the oval, is darned with the heavy white silk, so giving the effect of a brocaded centre. Napkins,

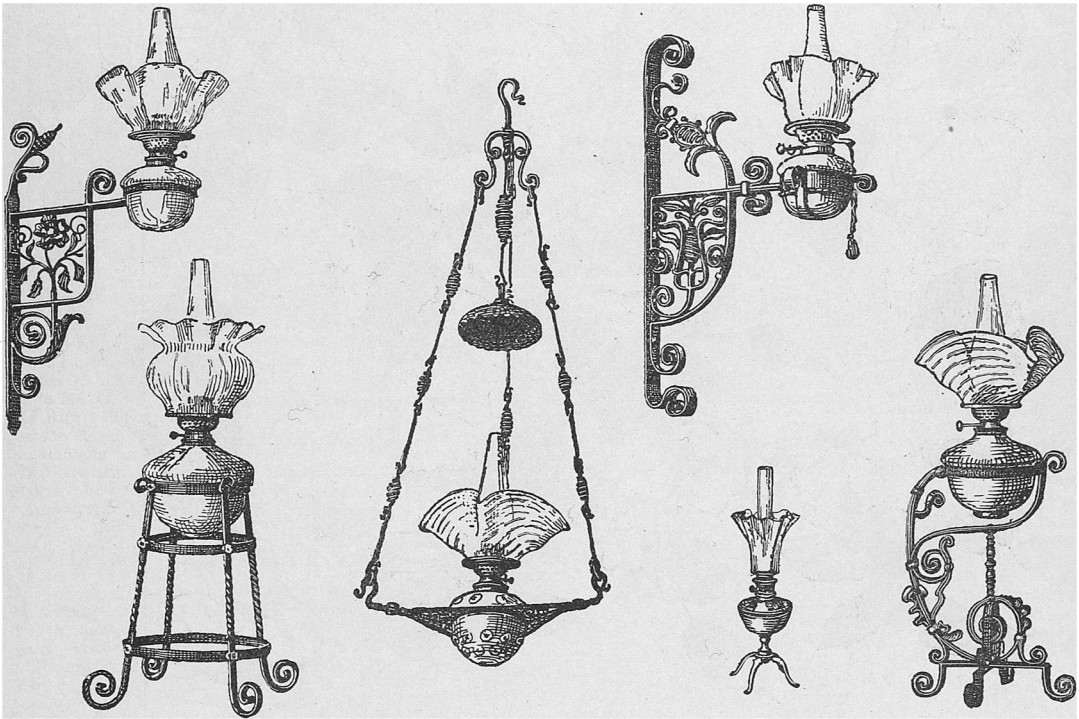


Fig. 4.—Wrought Iron Lamp Brackets, Lamp Stands and Chandelier.

Fig. 4 illustrates various styles of wrought iron lamp brackets and lamp stands made by this enterprising firm.

The difficulty in producing electrotypes of metals has been hitherto very great. It is to the credit of the above mentioned firm that we should lead the way in designing copper, brass and iron, and that we have not to send to Naples for good castings, or to Paris for good chasing.

In metal decoration nature is not always imitated, because of the great difficulty in using natural forms in any design. In fact, when we require organic forms in any decoration, we do not take horses and cats and dogs and men as we see them, but we resort to griffins, harpies, mermaids, sphinxes, satyrs, and everything as far removed from nature as possible. As to foliage, we replace the use of natural forms by using the acanthus, fleur-de-lis, etc. forms, brought into control by centuries of modification to fit them for the purposes of art.

which accompany the cloth, have the monogram of the owner embroidered in the same manner.

A BEAUTIFUL French boudoir has the walls finished in blue enamel of a pale tint, paneled with the most delicate mouldings of gilt. Over each doorway are beautifully painted flower pieces framed in rocaille frames; and covering the door are heavy satin curtains of the same shade as the walls. A portrait by Cabanel of the fair chatelaine hangs between the doorways, and the whole room is lighted by wax candles in gilt sconces. The furniture, which is covered with the most delicate Beauvais tapestry, is also Rococo, and the beveled ceiling is decorated in the same style. Needless is it to say that this room is simply perfect with its finishing touches of dainty tables and screens and quantities of growing plants.

ONE of the novelties, seen as yet only in the shops, is the swinging, crane like rod to be put on door frames, and from which the portiere is suspended, instead of being fastened to the frame. These come in white, with brass rings and trimmings

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